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ABSTRACT

A descriptive study was conducted of the career status of the graduates of the Adult and Community Education (ACE) program of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. A questionnaire was developed and sent to 238 graduates and active students of the program, asking about the kinds of careers being pursued, the salaries being earned, and the perceived importance of the ACE degree in obtaining the respondents' present positions. Eighty-nine questionnaires were returned from 40 active students and 49 graduates. The respondents identified a total of 68 different job titles; they were employed in a wide variety of fields, with health care and higher education employing the largest proportion of ACE students. Respondents ranged from the unemployed/retired to those earning more than $50,000 per year. The highest paid graduates were employed in health care, retail business, and consulting/training services. The highest paid current students were employed in utilities, health care, higher education, and school districts. Respondents rated the program as "moderately important" in acquiring their present positions, although several people noted that it did have a positive impact on helping them do their jobs more effectively. (The document includes 13 references and 5 appendices containing a list of the careers that students/graduates of the ACE program are pursuing; the questionnaire used in the project; the cover letter; a list of all mentioned occupations; and information on student awards, publications, and presentations.) (Author/KC)

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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE CAREER STATUS OF THE GRADUATES AND ACTIVE STUDENTS IN THE MASTERS OF ARTS DEGREE PROGRAM IN ADULT & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

A RESEARCH PAPER

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Course

AC 745

by

Donna Krepin Mohan

December 16, 1990

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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ABSTRACT

This research project surveyed the graduates and active students (N=238) of the Adult and Community Education program of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The purpose of the research was to conduct a descriptive study of the career status of the program's graduates and active students, studying the kinds of careers being pursued, the salaries being earned, and the perceived importance of the ACE degree in acquiring the respondents' present positions.

Eighty-nine (n=89) questionnaires were returned from 40 active students and 49 program graduates. The respondents identified a total of 68 different job titles and work in a wide variety of fields, with health care and higher education employing the largest proportion of ACE students. Salaries ranged from unemployed/retired to over $50,000 per year. The highest paid graduates were employed in health care, retail business, and consulting/training services. The highest paid current students were employed in utilities, health care, higher education, and school districts.

On the subjective item asking respondents to rate how important they felt the ACE degree was in acquiring their present position, the average response was 5.03 signifying "moderately important." Several people added notes to the effect that although the degree did not play a major role in helping them acquire their positions, it did have a positive impact on helping them do their jobs more effectively.

The information gathered through this study will be used by the ACE department to provide a clearer picture of who the ACE graduates and current students are, the careers they pursue, and how the program can be developed to better serve them in the future.

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CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Tell someone that you are working on a Masters in Adult and Community Education and they will look at you quizzically and ask what that means. Parents, who are concerned about their adult children changing career paths, ask, "But what will that get you when you're done?"

Indeed, even students in the adult education programs sometimes wonder the same thing and query their professors as to potential career opportunities in the field. Boulmetis writes that, "Inevitably all professors of adult education at one time or another have been approached by a prospective graduate student who asked the question, 'What exactly can I do with a graduate degree in adult education'?" (p. 22).

As pointed out by Aslanian and Brickell (1988), "most adults do not learn for the sheer pleasure of learning" (p.1), but rather, "most adults seek degrees that have immediate utility" (p. 42). They seek out programs of study which will help them cope with life transitions such as career moves and marital status changes, and view learning as "a liquid resource, not a long-term capital investment" (p. 42).

Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) began a Master of Arts in Adult and Community Education program in 1976, which continues to prepare graduates to enter "a wide variety of career opportunities" in the fields of business and industry, health, colleges and universities, community and social services, as described in the program's promotional literature. Like other students in the field of adult education, students at IUP are asking the same questions,

"What can we do with this degree?", and "What are former graduates of the program doing now?"

Participants in the Adult and Community Education program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania are not only interested in the related fields of adult and community education, they are themselves adult learners with needs and goals in common with the population which they are studying. As such, the typical ACE student is goal-oriented and need-driven and would benefit from " a more in-depth and specific explanation of how graduates earn a living with these newly acquired skills and knowledge about how adults learn" (Boulmetis, p. 22). Therefore, this study can help motivate present students to stay with the program, because a more clearly defined potential end result is now available to them. In addition, the results of this study may help current students identify areas of interest in order to channel their energies.

Participation in any graduate level program involves a major undertaking in time, energy and finances. The information obtained from this study may be able to help potential students decide if they really want to enter the program, and can help the ACE program recruit potential students by being able to more accurately report on the current career circumstances of program graduates. Also, faculty may find the results helpful in the decision-making process regarding curriculum changes.

Many authors have pointed out that adults are motivated to take courses in order to prepare for career advancement (Aslanian and Brickell, 1988; Kelly, 1988; Morstain and Smart, 1977; Smart and Pascarella, 1987). Therefore, it is good promotion to demonstrate the careers to which a course of study may lead. As Hartman asks,

"where do all those adult education graduates go" (p. 5)?

Problem Statement

The purpose of this research paper was to conduct a descriptive study of the career status of the graduates and currently active students of the Master of Arts in Adult and Community Education program of Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Research Questions

1. What kinds of careers are the program's graduates and active students currently pursuing?
2. What salaries are the graduates and active students earning?
3. How important do the graduates rate the Adult and Community Education (ACE) degree in acquiring their present positions?

Limitations

This study surveyed the graduates and current students of the program as listed on the department's mailing list which had not been updated recently, therefore, it was inevitable that some of the addresses would no longer be current, and some questionnaires would be returned as undeliverable. All responses to the questionnaire were voluntary, so the possibility existed that some recipients would chose not to respond for any number of personal, indeterminate reasons.

Just as the program participants came from different backgrounds and age and gender differences, the same variations applied to the questionnaire participants. It was not possible to select a balanced sample of respondents. The identifiable characteristics of the respondents are described later in this paper.

Definition of Terms

ACE - Abbreviation for Adult and Community Education as used to describe the program or the students in the program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Adult Education - In this paper the expression is used as defined by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982),

> Adult education is a process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristic of adult status undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills (p. 9).

Active - Used to identify those persons who are currently participating in the ACE program at IUP; also called current students.

Career - This term is used as defined by Webster's New World Dictionary (1983), "a profession or occupation" (p. 94).

Community Education - Used as described by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), this term "refers to any kind of educational program or activity designed to serve people 'out in the community,' whether preschoolers or the elderly" (p. 13).

Graduate - Used to label any person who has successfully completed the degree requirements of the Master of Arts in Adult and Community Education program at Indiana University.

IUP - Abbreviation for Indiana University of Pennsylvania, located in Indiana, Pennsylvania.

Salary - The compensation which is received annually for work performed.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study is the first formal analysis done of the careers and earnings of graduates of the Adult and Community Education program at IUP. However, other authors have considered the questions of what careers exist in the broad field of adult education, and what are adult education graduates doing and earning. A more extensive body of literature exists to substantiate the theory that adults take on further education in order to advance or change their career status.

Adult Education Careers

Jensen(1964) explored the growth of the special role of adult educator and listed the following "careerists of adult education":

Public school directors and supervisors of adult education

Agricultural extension agents

University extension and evening college administrative staff members

Industrial training directors

Labor union educational directors

Government agency training directors

Health educators

Social agency adult work directors

Library adult education specialists

Adult work directors in religious institutions

Educational television program directors

Private and commercial school administrators of adult programs (p. ix).

The ACE department itself publishes a list of 31 potential careers for students who participate in the program (Appendix A),

organized in the following categories: business and industry, health, colleges and universities, community, and social services.

Most theorists in the field agree that there is a wide range of career opportunities for those involved in doing adult education. This was best expressed by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982):

> Professionals who work with adults in a purely educational capacity are adult educators and what they do is adult education, whether it is recognized as such or not. Thus, persons in business, organized labor, government, and the armed forces who design and conduct learning activities for adults are engaged in adult education, although they may refer to what they do as development or something else that obscures its educational nature. Likewise, there are people who work in certain fields, such as public health or recreation, and in certain settings, such as libraries, museums, churches, and broadcast studies, where their work is sometimes educational and sometimes not and where the education may or may not be directed at adults. Librarians, public health officers, social workers, recreation directors, TV producers, the clergy, and many other community service professionals are often partly or fully engaged in adult education, although their professional identities lie elsewhere (p. 15).

Adult Education Graduates

The Learning Resources Network conducted a major national survey of professional development in adult learning and discovered that "the typical practicing adult educator is new to the position, has little or no course work in adult education, [and] comes from a

field outside of adult education" (p. 4). Their survey showed that few adult education graduates actually go into the adult education field.

In contrast, a study done in 1986 at the University of Rhode Island found that of 90 useable responses from graduates in its Master of Arts program in adult education (total population N=167), 97.3% reported they were employed full time in adult education related positions (Boulmetis). The graduates were surveyed two years after graduating so that they would have had at least two years to 'find themselves' (p. 22).

It is difficult to explain the contrasting information presented by these two surveys. Perhaps the need for adult educators is so great that the few post-baccalaureate programs in the country can not meet the needs with the limited number of graduates having credentials in adult education. That would help explain how all those folks without adult education backgrounds managed to get into and stay in the field.

The Almanac of Higher Education (1989-90) gave the total number of Master's degrees in the broad field of education as 75,501 (p. 27), with no breakdown by field of study. It was not possible to accurately determine how many adult education programs are available in this country, nor the number of graduates coming out of those programs. However, the Index of Majors (1987) reported a total of 69 institutions offering graduate level degrees in the field of adult and continuing education. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, in 1983-84 there were 678 Masters degrees earned in adult and continuing education, and an additional 97 Masters in Adult and Continuing Education Administration.

Motivation for Adults to Further Education

A clearer picture emerges of why adults pursue higher education. Career changes and other life transitions have a significant impact on the decision-making process when adults contemplate returning to school. Levine and Snoddy (1987) studied adults attending the Summer Chautauqua Program and found that 50% of adults questioned "indicated that one reason for enrolling in courses...was to assist in some life transition or change" (p. 1), and that "career changes are by far the greatest transition/change that the respondents see as the basis for involvement in academic programs" (p. 3).

Morstain and Smart (1977) developed a motivational typology of adult learners using Boshier's Education Participation Scale and found that the career-oriented group was second in size (25%) only to the non-directed group (52%). They state that "if postsecondary institutions wish to be genuinely responsive to the needs and interests of adult learners, it would seem essential to know something about the kinds of adult learners it attracts and attempts to serve" (p. 677).

Stoecker (1988) found that, "the importance of promotion, prestige, income and potential for these occupational rewards as well as their existence within an occupational organizational structure can be an important influence on whether to select graduate education..." (p. 5).

While not much has been written about the careers and earnings of those engaged in the fields of adult and community education, the literature does include some writings on the broad field of adult education as a career. Much more is available on why adults pursue advanced degrees, which should help the reader theorize as to the

optimal nature of educational offerings in order to be better able to attract a broad student base.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Setting of the Study

Indiana University of Pennsylvania is located in Indiana, Pennsylvania, a town located in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains in western Pennsylvania. The Adult and Community Education program has been offered at the Indiana campus since 1976. From 1977 to 1982 the ACE program was also offered as an outreach program through the Center for Community Education, at the University of Delaware, in Wilmington, Delaware. And since 1981, another outreach program was available in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area at the campus of the University of Pittsburgh (Ingram, 1988) until 1989, when the Pittsburgh program moved to a new site at West Penn Hospital, also in Pittsburgh.

The participants in the program have come from a wide geographic area served by the various program sites through the past 14 years, and have had varied educational and occupational experiences prior to enrolling in the program.

Study Sample

The sample which received the questionnaire instrument consisted of the current students and graduates on the departmental mailing list maintained at the Indiana office of the ACE program. The population numbered 238 (N = 238), consisting of 171 graduates, and 67 current or active students. In the graduate group there were 301 males, and 140 females. The current student group consisted of 14 males, and 53 females. The current students were included in the data collection process in order to gather data that was needed by the department about that group, and to serve as a comparison with the group of respondents who have already completed the program and

graduated from the university. Six active students had international mailing addresses and were eliminated from the sample due to time constraints.

Surveys mailed to graduates of the program were mostly sent to locations within the state of Pennsylvania, with the exception of 34 questionnaires which had out-of-state addresses. The mailing addresses for the current students were all sent to Pennsylvania addresses. No further information was available about the study sample, but additional data was requested as part of the questionnaire, which is attached as Appendix B.

During the period of data collection 35 questionnaires were returned due to insufficient or outdated addresses. These questionnaires had all been addressed to graduates of the program, bringing the actual number of graduates receiving surveys to 136.

Period of Data Collection

The questionnaires were mailed from the Indiana University Post Office in Indiana, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday, October 23, 1990. Recipients were requested to return them prior to November 1, 1990. It was noted that a questionnaire mailed from Indiana, Pennsylvania on October 23, 1990, was received the next day, October 24, 1990, in Pittsburgh, PA. The first completed questionnaires arrived on October 26, 1990 (N = 16), followed by 17 on October 27; 10 arrived on October 30; 6 were received on October 31; 9 were delivered on November 1; and the remainder (N = 31) arrived by November 15, 1990. There were no federal holidays, mail stoppages, or other unusual events during the data collection period which may have adversely affected the movement of mail.

Method of Collecting Data

A four-page questionnaire (Appendix B) was mailed to the population (N = 238) along with a cover letter (Appendix C) on IUP letterhead. Included with each questionnaire was a postage paid, addressed envelope to facilitate the return of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were coded to help the department correct their mailing list, but the recipients were assured that their replies would remain strictly confidential.

It was estimated that each questionnaire would take only a few minutes to complete, probably less than 10 to 15 minutes in most cases. The questionnaire consisted of four pages, the first two of which contained the sections pertinent to this study. The last two pages contained additional items added by the ACE department for the purpose of gathering data about the activities of the past and current students. A brief summary of the data collected from the last two pages is included as Appendix D to this report.

Pages 1 & 2 of the questionnaire consisted of 12 items, 11 of which requested demographic data such as age, gender, job title; and 1 subjective question which asked respondents to rate the degree of importance they believe the ACE degree had in the acquisition of their present position. It should be noted that the survey questions were incorrectly numbered 1 to 13, with the number 10 inadvertently omitted. Several of the items asked for short, narrative type answers, while others required the respondent only to check the appropriate space in order to reply.

Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis of the data was done , using raw numbers and percentages when appropriate. On some of the items it was

informative to contrast the status of the program graduates with that of the active students, and in those situations comparison tables were provided.

Comments on Procedures

One of the recipients was identified as an active student on the departmental mailing list, but upon return of the questionnaire indicated that she had just recently graduated. The data was corrected to reflect that change. Another individual was listed twice on the mailing list as both a graduate and an active student. She received two copies of the questionnaire, but returned only one with an explanatory note. There were no other unusual circumstances in the data collection process.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The questionnaire used in this study asked the ACE graduates and current students to provide demographic data focusing on their current career status. The study was attempting to determine the types and kinds of careers being pursued by the ACE degree recipients, the salaries they were earning, and the importance they placed on the ACE degree in the acquisition of their present positions.

The surveys were sent out to 238 individuals. Thirty-five were returned as undeliverable, leaving 203 as the number actually sent. Returns are reported as follows.

Table 1

Number of Questionnaires (N=203)

	Active	Graduates	Total
Sent	67	136	203
Returned	40 (59.7%)	49 (36%)	89 (43.8%)

Not all of the items were answered on all the questionnaires received, therefore, some of the data reflects a slightly smaller group of respondents.

Results

Career Status

The respondents identified a total of 68 different job titles which are listed in Appendix D. To facilitate analysis of the data, the various occupations were grouped with similar titles and are

listed in Table 2, below.

Table 2

MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED GENERALIZED* OCCUPATIONS

Occupations/Titles:	Active:	Grads:	Totals:
Director, Asst. Director, Principal, President, Dean, Sec.Chief	4	14	18
Coordinator, Administrator, Supervisor, Manager, Advisor	11	6	17
Teacher, Lecturer, Instructor, Assoc. Professor, Trainer	4	8	12
Specialist, Technologist, Technician	3	3	6
Sales	4	1	5
Executive Secretary, Administrative Asst., Graduate Asst.	2	3	5
Unemployed	3	2	5
Self-employed	-	5	5
Nurse (RN, LPN, School, Gastroenterology)	3	2	5
Caseworker (Social, Psychiatric)	3	1	4
Retired	-	2	2
Representative	-	2	2
Dietician	-	1	1
Broadcasting Program Staff	-	1	1
Human Resources Interviewer	-	1	1
Consultant, Community Organizer	1	-	1
Floral Designer	1	-	1
Postal Worker	1	-	1
Residential Program Worker	1	-	1

*Note: Decisions to group occupations were based on descriptions of job responsibilities as given in item #8. Respondents were grouped with others describing similar levels of responsibility. Several respondents reported 2 different occupations which were included in this chart, accounting for the extra numbers listed.

The largest group consisted of those respondents who identified

their job titles as "director", "assistant director", or another title reflecting directorship responsibilities as detailed in the reported job descriptions. Interestingly, 28.5% of all the responding graduates identified themselves in this group, while only 1% of the current students are employed as directors.

The second largest group consisted of those who identified themselves as "coordinators", "administrators", and related titles, which was only one respondent smaller than the director group. However, respondents in this second group were more likely to be active students (representing 27.5% of all active respondents) than program graduates (just 12% of all degreed respondents).

The category of "teacher", "lecturer", etc. was also well represented by program graduates (16% of that group), but for active students this category consisted of the same number who are employed in the area of sales (8% for both occupational categories.)

Five of the program graduates (10.2%) identified themselves as self-employed, while none of the active students categorized themselves as such.

An analysis was made of the various fields in which ACE students are employed, as given in Table 3.

Table 3

FIELDS IN WHICH ACE GRADUATES AND ACTIVE STUDENTS ARE EMPLOYED

Occupational Fields:	Active Stds. N=40		Graduates N=49	
Health Care (school nurse, mental health, all health-related)	10	25%	16	32.6%
Higher Educ. (univ., college, jr. coll., comm. college)	9	22.5%	9	18.3%
Social Service Agencies	5	12.5%	1	2%
School Districts (excluding nurses)	3	7.5%	4	8%
Retail Business	4	10%	2	4%
Consulting & Training Services	1	2.5%	3	6.1%
Unemployed	3	7.5%	2	4%
Retired	-	-	2	4%
Vocational-technical Schools	-	-	2	4%
Non-profit	2	5%	2	4%
Prison System	1	2.5%	1	2%
Utility	1	2.5%	-	-
Private School	1	2.5%	-	-
Advertising Agency	-	-	1	2%
Insurance	-	-	1	2%
Publishing/Distributing Educ. Materials	-	-	1	2%
Creative Arts	-	-	1	2%
Radio Broadcasting	-	-	1	2%

Note: Percentages are rounded figures; may not equal 100%.

For both groups, graduates and active students, the health care field was best represented with 25% of all active students, and 32.6% of all ACE graduates employed in that field. Higher education was next in representation, employing 22.5% of the active students, and 18.3% of the graduates. The remainder of the respondents were

fairly well spread out over the other occupational fields.

Income

Respondents were compared by reported income and field of employment, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 ACE Students by Field and Income

(N = 80*)

Field of Employment: Numbers in front of the slash represent graduates, followed by active students after the slash. EX: 2graduates/2active

Income by thousands:	15 or less	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	over 50
Health care	2/1	3/5	0/1	2/1	4/0	2/2	2/0	-	1/0
Higher education	0/2	0/1	0/2	3/1	2/0	1/1	3/0	-	-
Social services	0/1	0/3	-	1/2	-	-	-	-	-
School districts	-	-	0/1	1/0	1/1	1/1	1/0	-	-
Retail business	1/3	-	-	0/1	-	-	-	-	1/0
Consulting/trg. services	1/0	-	1/1	-	-	-	-	-	1/0
Vo-tech schools	-	-	-	-	-	-	2/0	-	-
Non-profit	-	-	0/1	1/0	0/1	1/0	-	-	-
Prison system	-	-	-	1/1	-	-	-	-	-
Utility	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0/1	-
Private school	-	-	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ad agency	-	-	-	1/0	-	-	-	-	-
Insurance	-	-	-	-	-	-	1/0	-	-
Publisher/dist.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1/0	-	-
Creative arts	1/0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Radio	-	1/0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* Four respondents who are unemployed or retired are not included in this table.

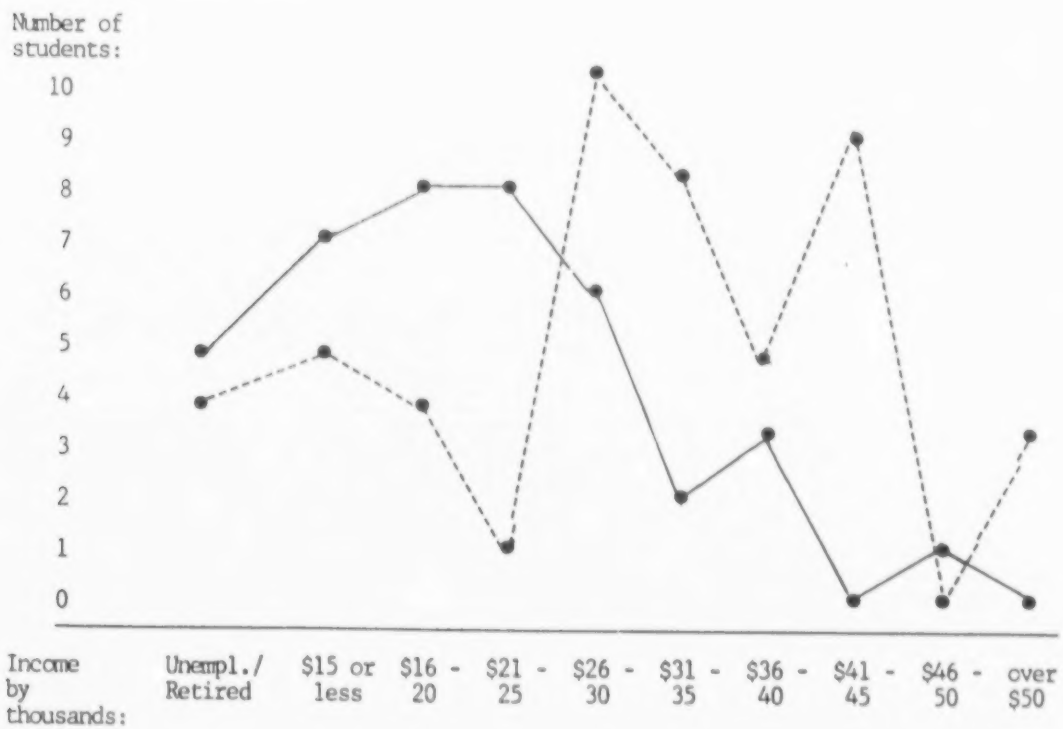
Item # 9 of the questionnaire requested that the respondents identify their current individual salary range and round to the nearest $1,000 of income. This table shows that the highest paying

positions are held by graduates of the program, employed in health care, retail businesses, and consulting/training services. They are followed most closely by graduates employed in higher education, school districts, vo-tech schools, insurance, and publishing/distributing.

The highest paid current students report themselves employed in utilities, health care, higher education, and school districts. Several of the respondents in both groups in the lower pay ranges indicated that they were part time workers.

A clearer comparison of the incomes of the active students and graduates is shown in Table 5, which shows most graphically that the program graduates as a group are earning higher incomes than the current students.

Table 5 COMPARISON OF ACTIVE STUDENTS AND GRADUATES BY INCOME N=89



While only 1 current student is earning more than $36,000 to 40,000, 9 graduates are in the $41,000 to 45,000 range, and 3 graduates report salaries of over $50,000. At the lower end of the earnings scale, only 1 graduate is presently unemployed, 2 are retired, and 1 identified herself as self-employed as a housewife/mother with no income. Five active students identified themselves as unemployed, and none are retired.

Comparing the respondents by income and gender resulted in Table 6, which shows a marked disparity in the earning power of males and females, whether graduates of the program, or not.

Table 6 ACE STUDENTS BY INCOME AND GENDER N=89

Income by thousands:	unempl./ retired	$15 or less	$16 - 20	$21 - 25	$26 - 30	$31 - 35	$36 - 40	$41 - 45	$46 - 50	over $50	totals
Male grads.	-	1	1	-	1	2	1	3	-	2	11
Female grads.	4	4	3	1	9	6	4	6	-	1	38
Total grads.	4	5	4	1	10	8	5	9	-	3	49
% grads.	8%	10%	8%	2%	20%	16%	10%	18%	0%	6%	98%
Male active	1	-	2	-	1	2	1	0	1	-	8
Female act.	4	7	6	8	5	-	2	-	-	-	32
Total active	5	7	8	8	6	2	3	-	1	-	40
% active	12.5%	17.5%	20%	20%	15%	5%	7.5%	0%	2.5%	0%	100%
Total ACE students	9	12	12	9	16	10	8	9	1	3	89

Note: percentages are rounded figures; may not equal 100%.

In the graduate group, roughly 50% of the males earn $31,000 to 35,000 or less; while the same percentage of females earn only $26,000 to 30,000 or less. The gender/income disparity is even

greater for the current students, where approximately 50% of the males earn $26,000 to 30,000 or less; while half of the females earn an average of $10,000 less, falling in the $16,000 to 20,000 or less group.

In the graduate group, 18.2% of the males earn over $50,000, as do 2.6% of the female graduates. Of the current students, 1 male (representing 12.5% of the males) is the highest earner at $46,000 to 50,000; while the highest earning females (just 6.3% of that group) earn between $36,000 to 40,000.

Clearly program graduates do better financially than active students, but their earnings continue to reflect a lower earning capacity for females.

Ages

The program graduates who responded to the questionnaire have a median age of 41.5 years, with the mean being 44.4 (s=10.09). The youngest graduate was 27, and the oldest was 71.

Among the currently active students the median age was 39, with a mean age of 38.6 (s=8.43). The youngest active student was 23, and the oldest was 56. One female active student declined to reveal her age.

The respondents were analyzed by income and age in Tables 7 and 8 with their ages given by ranges of 5 years.

Table 7

ACE ACTIVE STUDENTS BY INCOME AND AGE (N=39*)

* one respondent did not report her age & is unemployed.

Note: the youngest active student was age 23; the oldest was age 56.

Income by thousands:									% in each earnings group:
over $50									0%
$46 - 50				1					3%
$41 - 45									0%
$36 - 40					1	1	1		8%
$31 - 35				2					5%
$26 - 30	1		1	1	2	1			15%
$21 - 25		1	2	2	1	1		1	21%
$16 - 20	1	2	1	2	1			1	21%
$15 or less	2				4	1			18%
unemployed/ retired			1		1	2			10%
Age groups:	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	
% in each age goup:	10%	8%	13%	21%	26%	15%	3%	5%	

Table 7 represents the active students and shows that 47% of the respondents are between 35 and 44 years of age, with 23% older, and 31% younger. Forty-two percent of the active respondents earn between $16,000 to 25,000 in annual income. Only 8% are aged 50 and over; only 3% earn over $41,000.

Table 8

ACE GRADUATES BY INCOME AND AGE (N=49)

Income by thousands:	Note: the youngest graduate was age 27; the oldest was age 71.										% in each earnings group:
over $50			2		1						6%
$46 - 50											0%
$41 - 45			3	2	2		1	1			18%
$36 - 40			2	1			2				10%
$31 - 35			3	1		1	3				16%
$26 - 30		3	2	4	1						20%
$21 - 25	1										2%
$16 - 20		1	1	1						1	8%
$15 or less		1			2	1		1			10%
unemployed/ retired		1					2			1	[illegible]
Age groups:	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 - 64	65 - 69	70 - 74	
% in each age group:	2%	12%	27%	18%	12%	4%	16%	4%	2%	2%	

Among the program graduates, 45% are between 35 and 44 years of age, with 40% of the graduates older, and only 14% younger. Fully 28% are aged 50 and over; and 24% earn $41,000 or more.

Importance of ACE Degree

In questionnaire item # 12 the graduates of the program were asked to rank the importance of the ACE degree in acquiring their present position. They were given a Likert scale with a range of 1 to 10, with 1 identified as "not important at all", 5 was equivalent to "moderately important", and 10 signified "most important". Of the 45 responses received on this item, the median response was 5 (moderately important), with a mean score of 5.03 (s=6.53). Those

respondents who were unemployed, retired, or gave no response were not included in this analysis.

Some respondents added explanatory notes to the effect that although the degree was not very important in acquiring(their emphasis) their present positions, it did play a significant role in helping them function effectively on the job.

Eight of the graduate respondents reported that they continued their academic work by earning, or working on, a Ph D. degree. Sixteen have participated in further continuing education or a second Masters degree.

Summary

While the respondents in this study reported a wide variety of job titles, the largest group of graduates identified themselves as "directors" or a related title, and the largest group of active students described themselves as "coordinators" or "administrators". The health care field was the most well represented by both groups, followed by the field of higher education. The program graduates are earning higher salaries as a group than are the active students, and males in both groups are earning more comparatively than females. The average program graduate is age 44.4, and the average active student is age 38.6. Among the graduates, the respondents ranked the ACE degree as moderately important in helping them acquire their present positions.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Statement of the Research Problem

The purpose of this research paper was to conduct a descriptive study of the career status of the graduates and current students in the Master of Arts in Adult and Community Education program of Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Major Findings and Conclusions

Research Question 1

What kinds of careers are the program's graduates and active students currently pursuing?

Findings

The program's graduates are engaged in a wide variety of careers with the largest numbers of them employed as directors, coordinators, and teachers in the fields of health care, higher education, and school districts. Likewise, the active students are involved in many different careers, but the largest group is employed as coordinators, administrators, or hold other managerial titles. The largest group of active students is employed by health-related organizations, followed closely by higher educational institutions.

Conclusions

While this information affirms the claim made in the departmental literature (Appendix A) that a "wide variety of career opportunities are available" to those with an ACE degree, it shows that the majority of the graduates have found themselves in the fields of health, higher education, and school districts, with very few in social services, community organizations and business and industry. Unlike the program graduates, the active students are

more widely spread out over many different occupations and fields, perhaps reflecting the transitional status of their present careers.

Research Question 2

What salaries are the graduates and active students earning?

Findings

Detailed answers to this question are best found in Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. To summarize, the graduates are earning more money as a group than the current students, with the median income for graduates being $26,000 to 30,000. The median income for the active student group was $16,000 to 20,000.

Conclusions

The data suggests that the ACE degree can have an impact on an individual's earning ability in the area of an additional $10,000 per year.

Research Question 3

How important do the graduates rate the ACE degree in acquiring their present positions?

Findings

The responses to this question were widely spread out, with the average response being 5.03, meaning "moderately important", with a standard deviation of 6.53. some respondents said that even though the degree was not of major importance in acquiring their positions, it was significant in helping them with the skills needed in their employment.

Conclusions

On a subjective item such as this it is difficult to draw conclusive evidence as to the importance of the ACE degree. Some of the respondents were already in their jobs prior to earning the

degree, but found it helpful nonetheless. The moderately important ranking shows that the graduates feel that earning the degree was significant in their career advancement.

Implications and Applications

There several implications to be drawn from this study as applied to the three key research questions on careers, earning power, and significance of the ACE degree on career placement.

The active students and the program graduates are drawn from and to similar fields of employment, with the degree affecting the respondents earning power and levels of responsibility. However, contrary to what the departmental literature suggested (Appendix A), very few of the graduates reported being involved in the field of business and industry. This finding should alert the program planners to a possible deficiency in the program design or promotion with regard to placing graduates in the field of business and industry. To facilitate more students eventually entering that arena, the department should endeavor to form more linkages with members of the business community, and encourage and assist more students to participate in internships in business and industry settings.

Current students and faculty need to be made aware of the wide range of opportunities available to them, and specific information such as obtained in this study would be better than vague generalities. If a student can set a career goal early on in the program it can help that student focus his energies more succinctly throughout the various projects and research papers required during the ACE program.

There are many factors affecting an individual's salary, such as

time on the job, expertise in the field, and even personality and political factors. Therefore, it is difficult to state with certainty that individuals with the ACE degree can expect to earn more than those without it, however, the data obtained through this study does support that conclusion. Even though the program graduates as a group are slightly older than the active students (average ages 44.4 and 38.6 respectively), the majority in both groups fall in the mid-life years, lessening the likelihood that their salary disparities can be attributable mostly to age factors.

Especially in today's recessionary environment, prospective and current students need to know that their hard work, time and tuition money can result in the bottom line reward of improved earning power. For most of the program's participants attending graduate school is a part time endeavor while they also work full time and attend to families. This requires a long term commitment to the program which can best be sustained through focusing on the end rewards, both intellectual and practical.

The ACE graduates rated having the ACE degree as moderately important in obtaining their current positions. That is not a bad overall rating considering that some of them are in fields rather unrelated to adult and community education, and others are in positions they may have held prior to earning the degree. In some cases the fact that an individual had earned a Masters degree in some area may have been significant, rather than that it was in adult and community education. The responses to the rating question showed again that ACE graduates differ widely in opinions on the program's impact on their careers. The median score was 5

("moderately important") showing that 1/2 of the responses were lower, and 1/2 were higher.

Many of the respondents requested copies of the results of the study, indicating that they were eager to obtain this kind of information themselves. If funding could be obtained through a grant or departmental budgeting, a newsletter for past and present students would be helpful in keeping students abreast of developments in the field and department, and aware of the activities of their colleagues. A section could be devoted to career news so students could learn about the career activities of fellow students and graduates. Organizations could receive copies of the newsletter to promote the existence of the program and to encourage those organizations to advertise internship opportunities and job openings in the newsletter. Developing such a networking newsletter may be a good internship project for someone with interests in editing and promotions.

Recommendations for Further Research

The present research focused on three main issues of careers, earnings, and perceived importance of the ACE degree. Other characteristics of the ACE students could be studied in future research, such as most common undergraduate degrees, and the impact of past employment on future employment. Another area that could use more attention is to do a comprehensive needs analysis of the ACE student in order to better structure the program to meet the needs of the participants. In conjunction with a needs analysis of current and prospective students, a post evaluation completed by graduates would provide valuable information for future program design.

This study looked at practical areas of careers and earnings, but much more work could be done on many other aspects of the ACE program to ensure its continued success and viability in the future. In addition, this study could be repeated several years from now to see how the results are changed by the passing of time.

The students and graduates in adult and community education are in an exciting and constantly evolving field. An effort should be made to monitor the pulse of the field by keeping in touch with the practitioners who actually out there doing adult and community education in the real world.

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APPENDIX A

CAREERS IN ADULT & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

A wide variety of career opportunities are available to you with a Master of Arts in Adult & Community Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Consider yourself in one of these professional positions:

Business & Industry

Human Resource Manager
Training Director
Director of Employee Relations
Industry/Education Coordinator
Human Resource Consultant/Trainer
Info/Public Relations Coordinator

Health

Staff Development Coordinator
Coordinator of Nursing Education
Supervisor of Patient Education
Dietary Supervisor/Consultant
Director of Community Ed Programs
Volunteer Services Coordinator

Colleges and Universities

Continuing Education Administrator
Program Director for Community/
University Study
Director of Lifelong Learning
Cooperative Extension Agent
Director of Community Services
Coordinator of Grants
Conference Coordinator

Community

Community Relations Specialist
Community Development Coordinator
Director of Community Outreach
Parks & Recreation Program
Coordinator
Community Education Coordinator
Community School Director

Social Services

Executive Director
Adult Education Administrator
Job/Career Counselor
Program Director
Day Care Program Coordinator
Adult/Literay Instructor/Tutor

For more information write or call:

Dr. Gary Dean, Graduate Coordinator
222 Stouffer Hall
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, Pa. 15705
(412) 357-2470

APPENDIX B

ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION
STUDENT DATA

Purpose:
The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about the careers and accomplishments of current and former students in the ACE program in order to develop a profile of the program. All personal identities will be kept strictly confidential. Your time and effort in completing the questionnaire is appreciated.

Directions:
Please complete the following items. To indicate that an item does not pertain to you, enter N/A for that item. If necessary, use additional paper.

1. Sex: ____Male ____Female

2. Age: ____

3. What undergraduate degree(s) do you have?
_____ Date:_____

_____ Date:_____

4. If graduate, month & year of ACE degree:
_____19_____.

5. Present job title: _____

6. Employer:_____

7. Type of organization (i.e.: manufacturing, health care, etc.):
_____

8. Brief job description specifying primary areas of responsibility: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Current individual salary range (round to nearest $1,000):

_____ presently unemployed
_____ $15,000 or less
_____ $16,000 to 20,000
_____ $21,000 to 25,000
_____ $26,000 to 30,000
_____ $31,000 to 35,000
_____ $36,000 to 40,000
_____ $41,000 to 45,000
_____ $46,000 to 50,000
_____ over $50,000

11. Number of years in present position: ____less than 1 year
____ 1 to 2 years ____ 3 to 4 years _____5 to 6 years
____ over 6 years

12. In your opinion, how important was having the ACE degree to you in acquiring your present position? Circle the number which most closely matches your opinion.

1=not important at all 5=moderately important
10=most important

1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7_____8_____9_____10

13. If you are a graduate of the program, have you done any additional academic work since earning your ACE degree?
_____yes _____no

If yes, please describe:_____

_____

_____

Thanks a lot for your help!

Please be sure to return
the questionnaires in the
return envelop by Nov. 1, 1990.

1. ACE Internship Project:

Location:_____

Semester and Year Completed:_____

Contact Person:_____

Brief Description of Internship:

2. Thesis or Practical Research (Circle One):

Title:_____

_____

Semester and Year Completed:_____

Committee Members (Thesis Only):_____

_____

_____

Brief Description of Research:

3. Awards and Recognition (Please list all awards, recognitions, and scholarships you have received. Include the date, title or award, and sponsoring agency.)

4. Publications (Please list the title, coauthors, publisher, journal, magazine, newsletter, date, etc.)

5. Presentations (Please list title, date, location, and Conference or organization.)

Adult and Community Education
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
222 Stouffer Hall
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087

(412) 357-2470

APPENDIX C

IUP

October 17, 1990

Dear ACE Student or Graduate,

Many of the current Adult and Community Education students are wondering where their studies in ACE may lead them. As a graduate of the program, or current student, you can probably remember feeling the same way. For my final research project, I am attempting to answer that question, and I am requesting your help.

Dr. Gary Dean has given me permission to contact you to ask you to fill out the enclosed postage-paid questionnaire. All replies will remain strictly confidential and should take only a few minutes to complete. The questionnaires are coded to help us follow-up with non-respondents.

Your answers will not only help me with my research project, but will be used by the department to develop a profile of the present and former students in the program. In addition, the results of the questionnaire will help ACE students identify areas in which they can use their specialized skills and knowledge.

Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire now if you can. I must ask you to return it <u>prior to November 1, 1990</u> so that I can compile the data. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at (412)486-6757 (home) or (412)543-2681 (work).

Sincerely yours,

Donna Mohan
ACE Student

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ALL MENTIONED OCCUPATIONS (N=89)

Occupations/Titles:	Active Stds.:	Graduates:
Asst. Director Educational Services	-	1
Manager Informational Services	-	1
Dietician	-	1
Teacher (secondary, elementary)	2	2
Certified Surgical Technologist	-	1
Field Representative	-	1
Social Rehabilitation Specialist	-	1
Sales Associate & Trainer	-	1
Executive Secretary	-	1
Health Education Coordinator	-	2
Director of Staff Development	-	1
Area Administrator	-	1
Donor Research Specialist	-	1
Director of Operations & Training	-	1
Unemployed	3	1
Associate Director of Dietary	-	1
Faculty-Instructor	-	2
Risk Management Representative	-	1
Associate Professor	-	1
Corrections School Principal	-	1
Broadcasting Program Staff	-	1
Self-employed	-	4
Human Resources Interviewer	-	1
Occupational Therapy Program Director	-	1
Asst. Director Adult Migrant Program	-	1
Coordinator of Practical Nursing	-	1
Administrative Assistant/Lecturer in Nutrition	-	1
Housewife/Mother [as stated occupation]	-	1
Director Program for Surgical Technologists	-	1
Administrative Asst./Adult Education & Cont. Educ.	-	1
Dean Continuing Education & Summer Session	-	1
Director of Continuing Education	-	2
Coordinator Learning Disabilities Program	-	1

(continued)

APPENDIX D (Cont.)

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ALL MENTIONED OCCUPATIONS (continued)

Occupations/Titles:	Active Stds.:	Graduates:
Registered Nurse	-	1
Staff Development Instructor	-	1
Retired	-	2
Director Dietetic Internship/Mgr. Nutritional Services	-	1
Section Chief of Occupational Therapy	-	1
Technical Support, Director	-	1
Educational Consultant/Program Director	-	1
(Psychiatric) Caseworker (Supervisor)	4	-
Consultant, Community Organizer	1	-
Salesperson; Sales Associate	2	-
Home Base Advisor	1	-
Gastroenterology Nurse	1	-
Director, Academic Computer Services	1	-
President	1	-
Coordinator/Counselor; Case Coordinator	3	-
Project Coordinator - Adult Literacy	1	-
Educational Coordinator	1	-
Telemarketer	1	-
Coordinator - Adult Partial Hosp. Program	1	-
Floral Designer	1	-
Carpentry Instructor	1	-
Executive - Medical Secretary	1	-
Postal Worker	1	-
Residential Program Worker	1	-
Family & Youth Specialist	1	-
School Nurse	1	1
Acting Director (Acad. & Admin. Service)	1	-
Supervisor - Generation Training	1	-
Training Director	1	-
Prevention Specialist - Secondary Programs	1	-
Licensed Practical Nurse	1	-
Coordinator (Project)	2	-
Business Instructor	1	-
Renal Dialysis Technician	1	-
Graduate Assistant	1	-

Appendix E

ACE Students Reporting Awards, Publications, Presentations

Information solicited on the third and fourth pages of the questionnaire was requested for the use of the ACE department. Respondents were asked to identify and describe their internship project, thesis or practical research, and any awards/recognitions, publications or presentations they received, produced or presented. Of the 89 respondents, 3 graduates detached pages 3 and 4 and did not return them. (The pages were printed back to back and stapled together with pages 1 and 2 in order to prevent them from being accidentally separated and misdirected.)

Of the graduates, an additional 3 left pages 3 and 4 completely blank or indicated "not applicable" or "none" to all items. Twenty-three active students did likewise.

The following table shows the numbers reporting activity in the areas of awards/recognitions, publications, and presentations.

Table 9

Individuals Reporting Awards/Recognitions, Publications & Presentations

	Awards/Recognitions	Publications	Presentations
Graduates	16	10	23
Active Stds.	12	5	10

Of the respondents indicating participation in presentations, several indicated that they have delivered too many presentations to list.